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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7411th meeting
Sunday, 22 March 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguin Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Qatar and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jamal Benomar, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Benomar, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Doha.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Benomar.

Mr. Benomar: At my last briefing earlier this month , the Security Council requested that I report on the implementation of resolution 2201 (2015), which was adopted unanimously on 15 February. I had reported, regrettably, that many of the Council's demands had gone unmet. The one new and positive development I have to report is the release from house arrest of Prime Minister Bahah and four cabinet ministers.

We as the United Nations stand for the peaceful resolution of conflict through negotiated political settlements. Furthermore, the Security Council has entrusted to me the mandate of facilitating inclusive negotiations in order to reach a consensus solution in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and its security annex. As such, I have reiterated time and again to all sides that such a solution is the key to unlocking the prevailing political impasse. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This is why, for many weeks now, and taking serious risks in precarious security circumstances, I have continued meeting with the 12 political parties, including the Houthis. I have also been in close contact with President Hadi, including through two visits to Aden. I am working with all sides in the hope of resolving the current standoff and to avert civil war in order to get the political transition back on track.

Nevertheless, the events of recent weeks and days seem to be leading Yemen yet farther from a peaceful settlement and towards the edge of civil war. Since President Hadi arrived in Aden, he has declared Aden as Yemen's temporary capital; started expanding the so-called popular committees loyal to him, which have now taken control of Aden; and accused former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the Houthis of launching a coup against him. The Houthis, in turn have rejected President Hadi as the legitimate leader of Yemen, and have continued to occupy Government institutions and to expand into other territories, despite the Security Council's repeated demands.

In early March, President Hadi took a decision to replace the Central Security Forces (CSF) chief in Aden, who is alleged to be loyal to former president Saleh and the Houthis, with a replacement who was seen as a controversial choice. However, the CSF chief refused to cede the post, leading to several rounds of fighting between his troops and military units against the popular committees loyal to President Hadi.

The stage was then set for what transpired next. On 19 March, heavy clashes took place between the Central Security Forces and the popular committees in and around Aden international airport. In a dramatic move, Air force jets from Sana'a were deployed to Aden and dropped bombs on Al-Maasheeq, the presidential compound. Fortunately, the President was not injured and moved to a secure location. Air force jets have reportedly continued flying over Aden since the attack. Consistent with the Security Council press statement of 20 March (SC/11826), I also condemn the attack on the airport and the airstrikes, which constitutes an unprecedented and dangerous escalation.

On 20 March, terrorists in Sana'a detonated explosives at two mosques, killing as many as 140 people and wounding over 350, which I also condemn strongly, and I offer my condolences to the families of the victims. The next day, the so-called popular committees seized a key military installation in Lahj, in the south, displacing troops. In response, the Houthi Revolutionary Committee issued a call for all military units in the North to mobilize in preparation for a campaign in the South.

On 21 and 22 March, Houthi militias, backed by units of the Yemeni army, appeared in rising numbers in Taiz, a northern industrial hub in the south-east and the gateway into Aden. Earlier today, it was reported that the Houthis have seized control of Taiz airport and other parts of the city. Also in Taiz, soldiers reportedly dispersed protesters using tear gas and live ammunition. As in Taiz, anti-Houthi demonstrations have taken place Sana'a and other cities. I am extremely concerned about the use of arbitrary arrest and detention, abduction and violence, and call for the human rights of peaceful protesters and journalists to be respected fully.

It would appear that the Houthis, backed by members of the Yemeni armed forces, are now moving further south, towards both Lahj and Aden. There is a prevailing sense among Yemenis that the situation is on a rapid downward spiral. Many are also concerned that the conflict is taking on worrying sectarian tones and deepening north-south divisions. Fears exist that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula will exploit the current instability to cause further chaos. Following the suicide bombings and fighting, emotions are running extremely high, and unless a solution can be found in the coming days, the country will slide into further violent conflict and fragmentation.

I have been engaged with all sides to call for restraint and to de-escalate the situation. Some have questioned the utility of our presence in Sana'a and continuing the United Nations-facilitated negotiations against the backdrop of the new developments. This leads me to repeat the question: What alternative do we have? It would be an illusion to think that the Houthis could mount an offensive and succeed in taking control of the entire country, including Mareb, Taiz and the south. It would be equally false to think that President Hadi could assemble sufficient forces to liberate the country from the Houthis. Any side that would want to push the country in either direction would be inviting a protracted conflict in the vein of a combined Iraq-Libya-Syria scenario.

There are extremists on many sides who would like these negotiations to fail and who have been actively trying to undermine them. I should reiterate that peaceful dialogue is the only option we have. As mediator, I must protect the integrity of the negotiations. I must have the space to engage in dialogue with all parties, including those responsible for using force to disrupt the political transition. We have been able to play a constructive role so far because the United Nations has engaged with all parties on an impartial basis, in the belief that it is in Yemen's best interests that we do so.

A final power-sharing deal to enable the transition to be completed can materialize only if we engage all sides in the political process, including the Houthis and President Hadi. Both are now crucial to the solution. The United Nations continues to engage with all the parties in a manner that neither legitimizes those who have used force to disrupt the political process, diminishes the legitimacy of the President and Government or harms the impartiality of the United Nations.

I have just concluded my second visit in 10 days to Riyadh. I thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for the assistance that has been offered to the victims of the recent violence in Yemen. I have also had consultations with the Government of Qatar in its capacity as GCC Chair, as well as with Mr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, Secretary General of the GCC. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the GCC have played a major role in supporting the Yemeni people over the years. I am confident that the Security Council, the GCC and the United Nations will continue to work closely together to help the Yemenis put their transition back on track.

In conclusion, I urge all sides, in this time of rising tensions and inflammatory rhetoric, to appreciate the gravity of the situation and to de-escalate by exercising maximum restraint, ceasing all hostilities and refraining from provocation or using violence to achieve political goals. Peaceful dialogue is the only way forward.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Benomar for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to express our sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting of the Security Council in order to bring us up to speed on the fast-developing events in Yemen that have followed the aggression on Thursday against the city of Aden and the presidential compound of Al-Maasheeq, in the context of the ongoing coup that began on 21 September 2014 with the Houthis' occupation of the capital, Sana'a. The entire population of Yemen deplores and rejects the coup, which is helping to fuel civil war and sectarian infighting. This violent scenario has continued with the insane acts of terrorism committed by unseen hands in Sana'a on Friday at the Al-Badr and Al-Hashoosh

mosques, in which dozens died, leaving a deep scar on Yemen.

In the gradual Yemeni political transition — which is a model for such transitions and for peaceful change, under the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its Implementation Mechanism, for which we thank our brothers in the GCC, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and which are designed to enable Yemen to emerge from its problems and build a modern federal State — all that there remained to do was to adopt the Constitution and convene presidential and parliamentary elections in a specific time frame so that our people could overcome their suffering and build a State based on the rule of law, justice, equal citizenship and good governance. The Peace and National Partnership Agreement permits no one to act selfishly, unilaterally or autocratically, or to use force to achieve political gains at the expense of the people's aspirations and interests.

The only way for our country to emerge from the current crisis is to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions regarding the situation in my country, most recently resolution 2201 (2015), which calls on Ansar Allah to abandon its coup of the constitutional legislature. As the President of Yemen said yesterday, that would involve withdrawing all the committees that have been imposed on ministries and Government institutions, as well as all the armed elements in Sana'a and other cities of Yemen; returning to the official military all the light, medium and heavy weaponry that has been plundered and seized from the armed forces units and security camps; working to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and abandoning any measures adopted since 21 September; and beginning to immediately implement the main points of the road map for the political process, particularly the Gulf Initiative and the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference agreed to by the United Nations and the 10 States sponsoring the Initiative, and establishing a specific timetable for that implementation.

I appeal to the Council, and to every representative of States that enjoy ties of friendship to our people, to fulfil their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to take urgent measures to halt the progression of aggression and violence that is undermining the legitimate authorities, partitioning Yemen and attacking its security and its political settlement, since the criminal acts of the Houthi militias and their allies threaten peace and security not only in Yemen but also regionally and internationally.

The Council's ongoing support for the constitutional legitimacy embodied in President Hadi Mansour and the unity and security of Yemen is reflected in the many resolutions it has adopted on this issue, including resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015) and 2204 (2015), as well as the relevant presidential statements. I would therefore urge the Council to silence the drums of war being beaten by the promoters of the coup, as well as the sedition they seek to fuel in my country, which is incited by Iran's ambition there.

I stress the President's call on all Yemeni political elements, which has been welcomed by our brothers in the GCC, to grasp the gravity of the current situation and to participate effectively in the GCC dialogue being held in Riyadh in order to find a solution that would avert Yemen's descent into civil strife, partition and violence. We support the Secretary-General's efforts with respect to Yemen, and hope that the Council will support them in the presidential statement it is to adopt momentarily.

In conclusion, I extend my thanks and appreciation to all our brothers in the GCC States, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for their political, financial and security-related support for our people at all stages of the crisis. I wish also to thank all State sponsors of the Gulf initiatives, as well as the members of the Security Council, the international community, the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the League of Arab States and all brotherly Arab States, particularly Egypt and Jordan, for their unwavering support for our people. The Yemeni people will never forget the resolve and support that have been offered to us, and we urge all involved to continue supporting the peaceful political transition in my country and not to abandon Yemen in these difficult humanitarian, economic and political circumstances.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait — I thank you, Sir, for convening this emergency meeting to discuss the dangerous events that continue to rage

in Yemen. I also thank Mr. Jamal Benomar, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, for his efforts.

The GCC reaffirms its full support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen and for the legitimacy of President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour. We reject all ongoing unilateral actions taken by the Houthis. We reiterate the GCC's readiness to support the security and stability of Yemen, preserve its constitutional legitimacy and reject all attempts to undermine it in order to restore Yemen's security and establish conditions conducive to a resumption of the political process pursuant to the GCC Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism. We hope that Yemen will not become a headquarters of terrorist organizations.

Since the adoption of resolution 2201 (2015) on 15 February, the Houthis have continued to take dangerous unilateral actions in an attempt to exacerbate the situation and to undermine stability in Yemen and the political transition there. These measures are blatant violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2201 (2015). The Houthis continue to commit their atrocities and have failed to withdraw their forces from State facilities and to release Government officials from detention. They continue to take measures that are the sole prerogative of the legitimate Government, in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. They have dismissed all decisions adopted by the international community, instead of striving to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and to maintain the unity of Yemen. They have bombed the presidential palace in an escalation that can only further exacerbate the situation at all levels.

At a time when the Security Council is assessing the outcomes of its own resolutions, the Houthis and their supporters continue to move to take control of the city of Taiz — an escalation intended to challenge the resolve of the international community. They are consolidating their control of Yemen without considering the consequences of their actions on the country's stability and security. In the light of their atrocities and violations, we call on the Security Council to take practical and urgent measures to ensure that its resolutions are implemented and to maintain international peace and security by adopting decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which will thwart those who violate its resolutions and prevent weapons from falling into the hands of the rebel groups.

We are deeply alarmed by the deterioration of the current security situation, including an upsurge in the activities of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, which facilitate the spread of the ideologies of extremism, terrorism and violence. The increasing terrorist attacks in Yemen, including the bombing of mosques in Sana'a and Sa'dah, have been strongly condemned by the GCC, given their worrisome impact on the security and stability of Yemen and the region.

Confirming the GCC's efforts in support of the security and stability of Yemen and its understanding that these can be restored only through serious dialogue among all sectors of the population, the GCC leaders have responded to the plea sent by the President of Yemen to His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia to convene a conference on Yemen under the auspices of the GCC secretariat in Riyadh, to which all Yemeni parties are invited. We reiterate our invitation to all Yemeni groups to participate in the conference, and hope that our Yemeni brethren shall prioritize the interests of their country and accept the invitation. They will enjoy all possible support of the GCC at all levels, because the security of Yemen is directly linked to that of the GCC.

Throughout every crisis in Yemen, the GCC has always sought to lend a hand to our Yemeni brethren, with whom we have always shared and will always share the responsibility to ensure the security and stability of the region. This will not happen without ongoing cooperation among the countries of the region to ensure mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

The current dangerous situation in Yemen will require hard work on our part to prevent Yemen's descent into even deeper peril, enhanced international efforts and efforts on the part of the international community to take its responsibilities seriously. We reiterate our commitment to supporting the aspirations of the Yemeni people and maintaining regional peace and security and the unity of Yemen, which are top priorities of the Gulf Cooperation Council. As we have said, Yemen's security and stability are directly related to the national security of GCC members, and we will take all measures necessary to protect Yemen's security, stability and vital interests.

The President (*spoke in French*): After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015), and 2204 (2015) and presidential statements of 15 February 2013 and 29 August 2014.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, and its commitment to stand by the people of Yemen.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council and commends its engagement in assisting the political transition in Yemen.

"The Security Council supports the legitimacy of the President of Yemen, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, and calls upon all parties and Member States to refrain from taking any actions that undermine the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, and the legitimacy of the President of Yemen.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for, and commitment to, the efforts of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Mr. Jamal Benomar, and to the United Nations-brokered negotiations.

"The Security Council condemns the ongoing unilateral actions taken by the Houthis, which undermine the political transition process in Yemen, and jeopardize the security, stability, sovereignty and unity of Yemen and expresses deep concern about the insufficient implementation of resolution 2201 (2015).

"The Security Council deplores that the Houthis have not implemented its demands in resolution 2201 (2015) to withdraw their forces from government institutions, including in the capital, Sana'a, and normalize the security situation in the capital and other provinces, and relinquish government and security institutions.

"The Security Council expresses serious concern over continued arbitrary detentions by all parties, in particular by Houthis, contrary to resolution 2201 (2015), and reiterates its demand for the unconditional and safe release of all persons arbitrarily detained.

"The Security Council welcomes that the Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and other members of the Cabinet are no longer under the house arrest imposed by the Houthis.

"The Security Council urges non-State actors to withdraw from Government institutions, including in the south of Yemen, and to refrain from any attempt to take over such institutions.

"The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms the air strikes against the presidential palace in Aden and attacks at Aden international airport. The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms the horrific 20 March bomb attacks at the two mosques in Sana'a and in Sa'dah, Yemen, which killed at least 126 and injured many more. The Security Council urges all sides to refrain from any further use of military force, any offensive military actions and other uses of violence.

"The Security Council reiterates its call urging all parties to agree upon and announce publicly dates for completing the constitutional consultation process, to hold a referendum on the constitution, and to conduct elections under the new electoral law pursuant to the new constitution and in this regard demands that the parties take all actions conducive to this process, including by the full implementation of resolution 2201 (2015).

"The Security Council reiterates its concern at the ability of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, mindful that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed.

"The Security Council reiterates that the solution to the situation in Yemen is through a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people for peaceful change and meaningful political, economic and social reform, as set out in the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, the Peace and

National Partnership Agreement and its security annex.

"The Security Council strongly calls upon all parties, in particular the Houthis, to abide by the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and its security annex and the relevant Security Council resolutions and to accelerate inclusive United Nations-brokered negotiations, including on issues relating to governance, to continue the political transition in order to reach a consensus solution and stresses the importance of full implementation of agreements reached and commitments made towards that goal.

"The Security Council emphasizes its call for all parties in Yemen, including the Houthis, Government officials, leaders of political parties and movements, and members of so-called popular committees, to adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation, reject acts of violence to achieve political goals, and refrain from provocation and all unilateral actions to undermine the political transition. The Security Council stresses that all parties should take concrete steps to agree and implement a consensus-based political solution to Yemen's crisis in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and its security annex.

"The Security Council welcomes the intention of the President of Yemen, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, to engage in good faith in the United Nations-brokered negotiations.

"The Security Council welcomes the intention of the Gulf Cooperation Council to convene a conference in Riyadh, upon the request of the President of Yemen, with the participation of all Yemeni parties to further support the political transition in Yemen, and to complement and support the United Nations-brokered negotiations.

"The Security Council reiterates the importance of all parties allowing all Yemenis to assemble peacefully without fear of attack, injury, arrest, or retaliation.

"The Security Council calls on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law.

"The Security Council reiterates its demand that all parties in Yemen cease all armed hostilities against the people and the legitimate authorities of Yemen and relinquish the arms seized from Yemen's military and security institutions, in accordance with the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and its security annex.

"The Security Council also urges all parties to facilitate safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance. It also reaffirms the need for all parties to ensure the safety of civilians, including those receiving assistance as well as the need to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel.

"The Security Council notes with appreciation the work of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar, and stresses the importance of the United Nations close coordination with international partners, including the Gulf Cooperation Council, Group of Ambassadors in Sana'a, and other actors, in order to contribute to the successful transition.

"The Security Council calls on all Member States to refrain from external interference which seeks to fomem conflict and instability and instead to support the political transition.

"The Security Council demands that all parties fully implement all Council resolutions on Yemen, including resolution 2201 (2015).

"The Security Council reaffirms its readiness to take further measures against any party in case of non-implementation of its resolutions on Yemen, in particular its resolution 2201 (2015)."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2015/8.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.